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### **Ohio Housing Advocates Applaud Portman's Eviction Crisis Act**

As Ohio's cities take steps to prevent unnecessary evictions, Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio) teamed up with Democratic Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colorado) Thursday to introduce the Eviction Crisis Act in the U.S. Senate.

This bipartisan bill is a measured response to the growing recognition that America's unconscionably high eviction rate is exacerbating housing insecurity at a time when so many families can't find a home they can afford.

The legislation is designed to support local efforts to prevent evictions and mitigate the negative consequences when they cannot be avoided. It would provide federal matching funds for local programs offering temporary emergency assistance to extremely low-income households facing eviction and local community courts that help mediate disputes and connect at-risk renters to other services that can help stabilize their housing.

"The Coalition on Homelessness and Housing in Ohio enthusiastically endorses the Eviction Crisis Act and the creation of the Emergency Assistance Fund designed to prevent unnecessary evictions," said Bill Faith, Executive Director of COHHIO and state partner of the *Opportunity Starts at Home* campaign.

"Evictions in many Ohio cities are hitting record levels as housing costs are growing increasingly out of reach, especially for those with the lowest incomes. We all now understand that evictions are not only the result of – but also a cause of – deeper poverty leading to increasing homelessness, particularly among families with children," Faith said. "This legislation has the promise of helping to reverse that tide. We appreciate the leadership of Senators Rob Portman and Michael Bennet working together to tackle this stubborn problem."

Nearly seven percent of Ohio's 1.57 million renter households received an eviction filing in one year. Cuyahoga, Franklin, Hamilton, Lucas, Butler, Clark, Marion, and Richland counties had the highest [eviction filings rates](#) in the state.

Several cities in Ohio have started taking action to reduce the number of unnecessary evictions. [Cleveland recently passed legislation](#) creating a right to legal representation

for low-income renters with children facing eviction, and [Columbus created a new Eviction Prevention Program](#) to provide emergency assistance and legal representation to at-risk tenants. [Cincinnati has passed legislation](#) aimed at expanding tenants' rights and preventing unnecessary evictions. [Toledo's Civil Legal Assistance Services](#) program funds legal representation for tenants, and [in Dayton](#), the mayor has created an Eviction Task Force to develop a local strategy.

“Local leaders in Ohio see the damage that preventable evictions inflict on their communities every day, and they’re taking bold steps to do something about it. But the problem is too serious for local governments to solve on their own,” Ohio Poverty Law Center Director Susan Jagers said. “The Eviction Crisis Act would be a big help for Ohio cities, which are well-positioned to benefit from emergency assistance funding for struggling tenants and federal support for landlord-tenant community courts. These programs would allow legal aid attorneys and other social services agencies to help poor people stay in their homes and avoid the turmoil that comes with an eviction.”

An eviction filing – even in cases where the ultimately tenant wins – makes it extremely difficult to secure future housing and often results in people winding up homeless. The Eviction Crisis Act addresses this problem by giving tenants the opportunity to correct inaccurate screening reports and requiring an eviction filing to be removed from the reports when tenants win an eviction case.

Faith said Sen. Portman’s proposal is a call to action for the state legislature to do something about the eviction crisis.

“Ohio’s cities are already doing a lot to stem the tide of eviction, and now Congress is getting into the act. Sen. Portman’s common-sense legislation has a lot of good ideas to build upon to reduce housing insecurity and homelessness among Ohio’s children and families,” Faith said.